

#TheCEGISCircle


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Current Institution:
**Master's of Public Policy
Candidate at LSE (2025)**

Role at CEGIS:
Program Manager

Duration of time at CEGIS:
**(Including the IIC Fellowship
experience, 2020-22)
Jan 2020 - June 2024
(Worked in the state teams of
Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Assam)**






What **inspired** you to **join** CEGIS?

What **drew** you to its **mission**?

As an IIC fellow working closely with the CEGIS team in Telangana, I had the opportunity to understand their analytical rigour and evidence-based approach towards tackling policy issues. It was this analytical rigor nestled within multi-disciplinary teams with researchers, economists, data experts and policy practitioners that was the most attractive bargain for me.

When my IIC fellowship ended, I saw CEGIS as the best choice for me to understand governance and state capacity in a comprehensive systematic manner. This mission personally resonated with my earlier goal of joining the bureaucracy. The chance to work at such a scale and have the access needed to make a real impact was the main reason I decided to join CEGIS.



How did your **experience** at CEGIS **contribute** to your professional and personal **journey**?

CEGIS has contributed to three major elements: my perspective towards policy, my aspirations, and my career trajectory, intricately linking both the professional and the personal.

Throughout my time at CEGIS, collaborating with grassroots functionaries and bureaucrats at all levels of the government shaped my problem-solving perspective. I recognised the complexity of the policy problems we face today, as “Wicked Problems” requiring solutions that could deal with conflicting values and uncertain scope.

Working alongside researchers like Naveen, Steven, and Sid deepened my determination to rise to the challenge of grappling with public policy frameworks and economic analysis. It was this exposure that sparked my ambition to pursue a master’s in public policy, where I am now building on this foundation through an academic lens.

Was there an experience at CEGIS that made a **lasting impression** on you?

I've worked across Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Bodoland (Assam), each offering unique insights and challenges. Leading in Bodoland has been the most enriching experience, but it was my first project at CEGIS in Telangana that profoundly impacted my perspective. It gave me a firsthand understanding of the relentless effort put in by frontline workers, the intricate dynamics of village communities, and the patience required to see meaningful interventions take root. Seeing systems at scale and also being grounded in context and informal norms brought home the importance of ensuring this balance while driving interventions for development.

These foundational lessons, combined with Praveen's mentorship at the time, not only shaped my approach but also prepared me to lead with greater confidence and clarity in my other roles thus far.



*With my team at
Bodoland, Assam*

What are you most **proud** of regarding your **time** at CEGIS?

I am most proud to have been part of the initial team at Bodoland. As a newly expanded region where CEGIS had signed an MoU to improve governance outcomes, we faced significant challenges. There needed to be an institutional memory to guide us through the complex demographics or navigate the intricacies of local institutions. Moreover, the infrastructure and facilities were limited and contrasting to my previous project locations.

Despite these obstacles, with Vjiay and Devashish's mentorship, my team members, Prachi, Suramya, and Madhurima rose to the challenge. They navigated both institutional systems and social dynamics with local nuances, steadily building trust and laying the groundwork for meaningful change. Finding camaraderie and building resilience and trust in a demanding environment continues to be a source of immense pride for me. Through this time, I also found lifelong friends who happen to be from Bodoland.



A picture of an Aanganwadi Centre painted with Suramya along with other BTR fellows - a very memorable event

How has your **experience** at CEGIS shaped your professional **goals** and **aspirations** moving forward?

CEGIS, through its mission towards enhancing state capacity has helped me identify 3 key qualities that I look forward to improving: patience, the ability to balance scale and grassroots context and building trust.

These qualities are tied together by the thread of long-term thinking, which continues to shape my professional goals. Currently, I find the areas of climate change and energy closely aligned with these principles. At the same time, I look forward to contributing to development work around state capacity, the foundation of which was facilitated by CEGIS, and hope to dedicate the coming decade to these pursuits.



With Naveen and Steven on a field visit as part of the Panchayati Raj Project in Telangana - Ramanthapur, August 2021

If there was one piece of **advice** you could give to **new team members** just joining CEGIS, what would it be?

For new members, especially those with limited experience, my advice would be to find an aspect of your career goals that aligns with the mission of CEGIS. Governance projects often operate on longer timelines and can feel unpredictable, with highs and lows that may sometimes be demotivating. This dynamic is reflected in the Multiple Streams Framework (Kingdon, 1995), which explores that convergence of problems, policies, and politics often happens unexpectedly and over extended periods. CEGIS, in many ways, is on a similar journey.

To navigate this, actively seek and push for open communication with leadership and tap into the institutional knowledge available. Understanding how quieter periods can be used for personal growth and skill-building is key to maximising your time here. This mutual alignment between individual aspirations and organisational goals will make the experience meaningful and rewarding.



*Painting at the
Aanganwadi Centre*

Any other **reflections** from your time at CEGIS that you would like to share?

Small or seemingly silly moments in development work often reveal more profound truths about the situation.

During a field visit, my team observed Anganwadi centres, which were joined by a supervisor and some workers. They knew we were coming, thanks to information from the district office. But their preparation took an unexpected turn. The supervisor, sounding very confident, announced, "We haven't had a severely malnourished child since the 1970s."

This was surprising, especially since we were in a district where hidden cases of malnutrition were definitely possible. However, the statement highlighted a more significant problem: more trust and honesty in how information is shared and acted upon.

In many cases, transparency and open feedback are sacrificed for strict rules and fear of punishment. This experience emphasised the importance of trust and humility in designing or informing a policy before it is analysed and decoded.